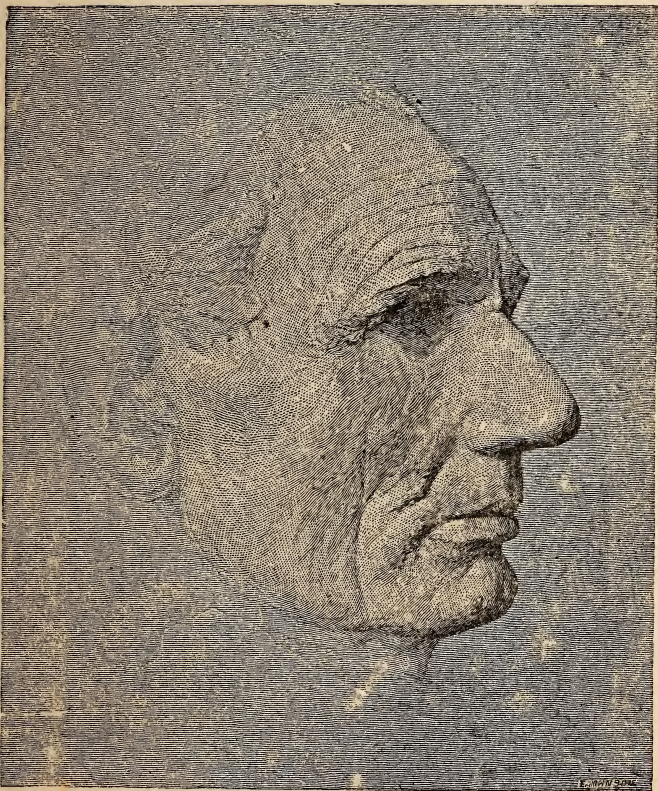


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LINCOLN CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION

To Mr Albert H
Gifford with
regards of
Joseph Benjamin
Oakleaf

Moline Del Feb '73



*“TO THIS PLACE AND TO THE
KINDNESS OF THESE PEOPLE
I OWE EVERYTHING.”*



WITH these words Abraham Lincoln, standing on the platform of the train which, on the morning of February 11, 1861, was to take him to Washington and the Presidency, bade farewell to his friends in Springfield.

And with these words he bequeathed to Springfield, to Illinois, something more than a sentiment, something more than a motto to be carved on monuments and corner-

stones — he bequeathed a trust, a very deep and lasting obligation.

It was with this thought — the thought of Springfield's peculiar obligation to the memory of Abraham Lincoln — that the Lincoln Centennial Association was formed and incorporated under the laws of Illinois in 1909. The object of the Association was, specifically, "to properly observe the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln; to preserve to posterity the memory of his words and works, and to stimulate the patriotism of the youth of the land by appropriate annual exercises."

There is place in this booklet only to mention very briefly what the Association has done. Its chief activity has been the holding in Springfield of an observance of Mr. Lincoln's birthday.

At the celebration in 1909 of the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of Mr. Lincoln, addresses were made by the Honorable James Bryce, Ambassador from England; the Honorable J. J. Jusserand, Ambassador from France; United States Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver of Iowa, Honorable William Jennings Bryan of Nebraska, General John W. Noble of Missouri, the Honorable James H. Cartwright, Justice of the Illinois State Supreme Court, and the Honorable Charles S. Deneen, Governor of Illinois. The Honorable Robert T. Lincoln was also a guest of the Association. Judge J. Otis Humphrey, President of the Association, presided as toastmaster.

Since that time, each year, on February Twelfth, men of distinction have journeyed to Springfield to pay tribute to the Great

Emancipator in his home city and beside his tomb.

Among these orators were:

Honorable William H. Taft, President of the United States.

Governors of Illinois—Joseph W. Fifer, Richard Yates, Charles S. Deneen, Edward F. Dunne, Frank O. Lowden, Len Small.

United States Senators—Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts, James Hamilton Lewis of Illinois, Lawrence Y. Sherman of Illinois, Thomas Sterling of South Dakota, Joseph W. Bailey of Texas, Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas, N. C. Blanchard of Louisiana, Fred T. Dubois of Idaho.

The Honorable William C. Sproul, Governor of Pennsylvania.

Count von Bernstorff, Ambassador from Germany.

Don Frederico A. Pezet, Ambassador from Peru.

The Honorable T. P. O'Connor, Irish Statesman.

The Honorable William Renwick Riddell,
Justice of the Supreme Court of the Province of
Ontario, Canada.

Right Reverend John P. Glennon, Catholic
Archbishop of St. Louis.

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise of New York.

Bishop Samuel Fallows of Chicago.

Bishop William A. Quayle of St. Louis.

President John Greer Hibben of Princeton
University.

Gutzon Borglum, sculptor, of New York.

Doctor Booker T. Washington of Alabama.

Congressmen Frank O. Willis of Ohio and
William A. Rodenberg of Illinois.

Most of the addresses of these guests the
Association has published in book form and
distributed to its members, and to various
libraries and associations throughout the
country. Many of them have contributed
something of permanence and value to the
volume of sound thinking and clear utter-

ance which the figure of Lincoln has inspired.

But only a beginning has been made; the peculiar obligation of Springfield to Abraham Lincoln has never been adequately expressed. To the expression of this obligation and to the planning and *carrying out* of a program worthy of the object for which it exists, the Association has whole-heartedly set itself.

A partial and briefly stated list of the things which the Association hopes to accomplish follows:

- I. Yearly observance of February Twelfth, the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, by public and other meetings at which the speakers shall be selected with reference to their especial fitness to make distinct contributions to the Lincoln idea, and the publi-

cation of the addresses in permanent form. An exhibition of Lincoln literature and other material to be a part of the birthday celebration.

Invitation to the President of the United States to be the chief speaker at least once in four years; that each chief magistrate of the Nation may have the opportunity of being the guest of the Association in Springfield and adding his tribute to the collection of Lincoln eulogies.

2. Prizes to be offered for best monograph on Abraham Lincoln, sufficient to attract able writers, to be offered every two or five years. Scholarships in Illinois colleges or universities for best work in original research or essay upon Abraham Lincoln in the High Schools of the State.

3. Cooperation and aid in the collection by the State of Illinois of a great collection of Lincolnia to include manuscripts, letters, books, pictures, relics of various kinds. In this should be included letters and pictures of Mr. Lincoln's family and important friends. The collection to be owned by the State and housed in the new Centennial Memorial Building.

4. All possible information in regard to Mr. Lincoln's life in Springfield and of places connected with it to be collected from every source with pictures and photographs. This information to be edited by a competent writer, published by this Association in a brief but readable style and distributed or sold to tourists or other interested persons.

5. Marking of sites in Springfield and Sangamon County connected with the life

of Mr. Lincoln and the care of markers already placed.

6. Encouraging and aiding in a Lincoln play or pageant to be given probably at New Salem at stated periods, perhaps every four years. The descendants of Lincoln's New Salem associates to be encouraged to take part.

7. Collection of the reminiscences of all individuals who have personally known Mr. Lincoln. This to be done by correspondence or interview.

8. Encouraging and aiding in the construction of a paved road or boulevard between Springfield and New Salem. This road to be planted on both sides with trees of suitable varieties named in honor and as memorials of Mr. Lincoln, his friends and contemporaries.

As can be seen, the program is an ambitious one. Obviously, these things cannot all be done at once. Some of them no committee or association in itself could ever accomplish — those, for instance, which require legislative sanction and the appropriation of public funds. But even here the Association can influence, by the weight of its membership and unofficial authority, a legislature which is seldom unwilling to forward any beneficial public work, and which in Illinois is particularly amenable to the tradition of Lincoln.

To set in motion such a program, the Lincoln Centennial Association must have a large, active and truly representative membership, to be drawn not only from Springfield and immediate vicinity but from the entire country.

LINCOLN CENTENNIAL ASSOCIATION.

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*Deceased.

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